

## AGRICULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

### Equipping the Hands That Feed Us

The Quebec City Summit highlighted agriculture as a way of life for millions of rural families in the hemisphere. Roughly one-quarter of Latin Americans live and work in the rural sector, and agricultural, food, and agribusiness production represent approximately 30 percent of many countries' gross domestic product. To promote agriculture and rural development, leaders in Quebec City called for increased dialogue, rural enterprise development, sustainable natural resource use, and alternative development programs.

The challenge now is for governments to capitalize on opportunities for increased competitiveness in the agricultural sector. New agricultural trends hold the promise of increased exports, enhanced food security, and higher-quality employment.

Working bilaterally and through international organizations, the United States is helping its neighbors meet the challenges of agricultural management and rural development. A key focus is explaining the benefits of new and emerging technologies, including biotechnology. At the same time, the U.S. is a leader in international efforts to safeguard agricultural health and food safety and to encourage countries to work within international frameworks that promote hemispheric and regional cooperation. We also have launched programs to promote agricultural diversification and non-agricultural employment opportunities for rural workers in need. These steps form the basis of a better tomorrow for rural life across the hemisphere.



Colombia's President Alvaro Uribe, right, serves coffee during the inauguration of a new Juan Valdez coffee shop in Bogotá in December, 2003. The Colombian Coffee Federation, which represents more than half a million coffee growers, inaugurated its flagship coffee shop with plans to open 10 others in the U.S. and elsewhere. (Fernando Ruiz, AP/WWP)

#### U.S. ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE HEMISPHERE'S AGENDA

- The U.S. has provided nearly \$40 million through the Opportunity Alliance to assist Central America and Mexico in realizing opportunities for trade, investment, and rural economic prosperity. The program focuses on **coffee growers** by encouraging coffee quality improvement, competitive marketing, business development, and diversification.
- The U.S. participated in the first and second **Inter-American Ministerial Meetings on Agriculture and Rural Life**. In these high-level meetings, ministers established guidelines to advance agricultural trade liberalization and rural development, and agreed to a plan of action to improve agriculture and rural life in the Americas by 2015.
- The U.S. promotes discussion of cross-cutting agricultural issues in fora such as the **Inter-American Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Health**. Representatives addressed concerns such as food safety, bioterrorism, and human development in rural communities.